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24 July 1952

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
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PSB D-27a

STAFF STUDY -- PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNIST
BW PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

I. PROBLEM

1. To analyze the implications of the Communist BW propaganda campaign and to make recommendations for action in the light of the conclusions reached.

II. DISCUSSION

HISTORY

2. A Soviet hate campaign against the United States is generally considered to have started on January 21, 1951. On that date Pospelov, in the presence of the full Politburo, delivered a speech on the theme "The hands of the American imperialists are steeped in the blood of the Russian people." Immediately after the speech there appeared numerous documents allegedly proving American atrocities. Photographs were published showing Russians who were being mutilated, killed, or tortured, presumably at the hands of Americans. Every Russian newspaper played up this theme. As pointed out by Mose Harvey in a POC briefing, this hate-America campaign is being carried on while the Soviet Union is theoretically at peace with the United States. This is without precedent even in Soviet history. Stories appear almost daily alleging further American atrocities. The "never forget and never forgive" theme is hammered into the Russian consciousness in a fashion which can hardly fail to have an effect. The charges usually give alleged details with dates, corroborative evidence, etc. The campaign is not limited to the USSR, but is carried on in the European satellite countries and in Asia. In Rumania, the Communist Party issued a directive explaining exactly how the campaign should be prosecuted. A similar directive was issued in China.

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3. The hate campaign continued throughout 1951. In the spring of 1951 there were allegations, which were not followed up, from Chinese Communist sources stating that the United States was engaged in germ warfare and poison gas warfare.

4. On February 22, 1952, a new campaign was launched by the North Korean Foreign Minister who charged that the United States was carrying on BW in North Korea. On March 6, the Peiping Peoples' Daily, an official Communist organ, said that the United States had sent 448 planes on BW missions over Manchuria the preceding week.

On March 8, Chou En-lai charged that the American use of germ warfare was aimed at "wrecking the Armistice talks in Korea, prolonging and expanding the aggressive war in Korea, and instigating new wars." He stated that US pilots who used BW weapons would be treated as war criminals.

5. A CIA Special Intelligence Estimate, published March 25, outlines the preceding facts and points out that the accusations concerning BW have been directed exclusively at the U.S. The Estimate also notes Malik's attempt to bring the issue before the UN and refers to the alleged evidence published in the Chinese and Soviet press. This "evidence" consisted of photographs of insects, germs, and germ bombs which American forces presumably dropped in North Korea.

6. The Chinese Communist Government rejected a proposal by the International Red Cross offering to investigate the charges. It refused an offer from India to assist in any investigation of the charges and also rejected a proposal from the World Health Organization to send aid into epidemic areas. The Chinese Communist Government claimed that an investigation was already being carried on by the Chinese and friendly governments and that ICRC and WHO were interested only in securing military information for the U.S. High Command.

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7. The campaign alleging BW activities by the United States continues. Various statements have been issued by Communist front organizations which have picked up the Communist charges. The World Peace Council will undoubtedly spearhead and coordinate a continued attack directed against the United States.

EFFECTS

8. Replies to a Department of State circular to missions in various parts of the world inquiring about the effectiveness of the germ warfare campaign suggested that as of April 2 the campaign had not been effective in most countries.

9. Most of the missions felt that U.S. sponsored programs to denounce the Communist charges would merely keep the campaign alive.

10. The British Foreign Office, however, has suggested that if the campaign continued it "may in long run be effective because of (a) anti-US feeling in certain areas (b) ignorance of realities of war (c) fear of plague (d) resentment of any Western warfare against Asiatics and (e) pacifism and lassitude in Burma."

MOTIVATIONS

11. A number of explanations have been advanced for the present Communist germ warfare propaganda campaign. The "real" reason for the germ warfare propaganda campaign against the U.S. is not certain. It is clear, however, that the present phase of the "hate America" campaign serves several purposes -- some of which may be peripheral to the as yet unidentified main purpose. Some of the uses to which the BW propaganda campaign is or can be put are listed below:

- a. It discredits the U.S. in the eyes of Asiatics.
- b. It provides an alibi for current (and future) epidemics.
- c. It makes Communist troops more fearful of picking up UN propaganda leaflets and less willing to be captured.

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- d. It creates a moral climate in which it might be difficult for the U.S. to employ BW, CW, or AW in the event of global war. (The Stockholm Peace Petition of 1950 combined all three in the category of weapons to be "outlawed.")
- e. It provides a justification for possible Communist use of BW.
- f. It provides a justification and a psychological preparation for all out global war if the USSR decides such a move is expedient.

12. The BW propaganda campaign has already provided the Soviet Union with a means of harnessing the forces of nature to their propaganda advantage. Any epidemics or any insect infestations anywhere provide an opportunity for charging the United States with employing BW or testing its BW capabilities.

For example, a Canadian communist newspaper quoted by TASS noted the outbreak of the hoof and mouth disease in Canada and charged that the U.S., Britain, and Canada were conferring on the production of "germ warfare weapons ... for spreading hoof and mouth and other animal diseases." Charges were also made that the U.S. was experimenting with locusts in Saudi Arabia and other Near Eastern countries. These charges coincided with the plague of locusts throughout the Near East. Troubled backward areas may be constantly invited to blame diseases and plagues on U.S. imperialist machinations. Even American efforts to help the peoples of these areas may be used against the U.S. For example, U.S. planes fighting locusts may be blamed for the plagues and U.S. doctors fighting the disease may be accused of spreading it.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

13. The BW propaganda campaign may be combined with a gas warfare campaign. Nearly all references to the U.S. use of BW mentioned U.S. failure to ratify the 1925 Geneva Convention on germ and gas warfare. The

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committee of "democratic lawyers" who "investigated" the use of BW in Korea have already referred to the American poison gas bombs in their findings. (The 1951 spring propaganda offensives from China, Korea, and Indo-China all claimed that the U.S. was employing poison gas against North Korean and Chinese troops.)

III. CONCLUSIONS

14. The germ warfare campaign is clearly part of a continuing Soviet hate-America campaign. By its scope and intensity it marks a new phase in the latter, however, suggesting that implementation of the hate-America theme will play a major -- and perhaps increasing -- role in Soviet psychological strategy.

15. The precise reason for choosing germ warfare as the subject of the present campaign is not known. However, it fits into one of the main patterns of the general campaign, which is to link the United States, and particularly the U.S. armed forces, in the public mind with the perversion of science.

16. While all types of communist hate-America propaganda are potentially serious from the U.S. point of view, the atrocity type of propaganda is particularly significant in its strategic implications, since it is directed primarily against the U.S. armed forces.

17. It must be expected not only that the hate-America campaign will continue, but that the Soviet communists will continue to emphasize special campaigns of the science-atrocity type, either by prolonging the current germ warfare campaign or by shifting emphasis to new subjects. In particular there is a strong possibility that the Soviet communists may soon launch an all-out propaganda campaign alleging that the U.S. has been using poison gas in Korea, perhaps accompanying this theme with charges of scientific extermination and torture methods in Korean prison camps.

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18. Irrespective of the popular credence in any country given to particular communist hate-America campaigns, the cumulative effect of these campaigns over a long period of time may be to seriously impair the U.S. psychological position in certain areas, particularly with relation to the possible use of scientific and unconventional weapons in case of general war. On the other hand the shrill pitch of this type of communist propaganda and the crude fabrications used to support it create a Soviet psychological vulnerability which we should be able to exploit. A U.S. counter-propaganda campaign alone may not be sufficient to cope with these effects. Rather, there may be required an integrated program of governmental actions, in relation to which propaganda will take its appropriate place.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

19. That POC inaugurate and coordinate operational planning, additional to that now being done, to deal with the problems raised above.

That the following suggestions (paragraphs 20 thru 23) be taken into consideration by POC in this planning:

20. Cautionary guidance on the explosive possibilities inherent in the BW propaganda campaign, indicated above, and the necessity for coordinating carefully all statements in conjunction with it.

Additional steps to secure due credit - not gratitude - to the U.S. for its positive assistance in disease and pest control, indicating that the responsibility for putting such efforts in the proper perspective rests principally on the governments concerned. (Purpose - to anticipate Soviet attempts to make the U.S. the scapegoat for epidemics and insect plagues.)

21. Consider measures to counter an anticipated early increase in atrocity charges. While BW has been the principal charge, it becomes less and less in our interest to concentrate on one issue.

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The charges should be attacked as a package. Following is one suggestion for countering CW charges, which are as old as the BW but which have not received such prominence:

Secret requests to the Secretary General of UN and to neutral governments such as Sweden and India that a team of officers of their medical units now in Korea be immediately relieved of present duties and detailed, on a secret basis, to an inspection team to tour UN artillery and air units and satisfy themselves and their governments that the UN forces are not using gas. These governments, plus one of the Arab League and one of the Latin American governments, should be requested to relieve this medical team as soon as possible by technically qualified officers, to remain on this assignment until an armistice is concluded.

Coordinated statements by the UN and the above-mentioned governments testifying that such charges are untrue.

Appropriate technical advice and assistance to the inspection team by CINCUNC.

22. Investigate the possibilities of applying or extending existing legal principles with a view to filing with the World Court or the UN, or both, a complaint against the USSR based on the theory of an international libel action, alleging particularly the more extravagant types of communist atrocity-propaganda and stressing the long-range 'lingering radiation' effects of such propaganda upon world security, as well as its threat to the mental health of young persons.

23. Arrange for the necessary intelligence support to appraise the significance and impact of the Soviet BW propaganda campaign, gas warfare allegations and "perversion of science" propaganda, in their relationship to the total complex of Soviet cold war strategy, and in order to assist the three objectives of planning, which are;

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a. To analyze and seek to identify the underlying strategy and the probable evolution of the hate-America campaign, to include:

1. The Communist BW propaganda campaign.
2. Gas warfare allegations.
3. Potato bug, locust plague and similar "perversion of science" propaganda.

b. To develop further measures to minimize the effects of the present BW propaganda campaign and to undercut anticipated future propaganda campaigns similar in nature or related thereto.

c. To develop new measures designed to seize and maintain the initiative in the fields of propaganda and operations.

24. That the Chairman, POC, submit to the Director, Psychological Strategy Board, appropriate progress reports on the project assigned by paragraph 19.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD

(Copy of identical Memorandum sent to the Board Members and
Brigadier General Jesmond D. Balmer, USA, dated June 6, 1952)

SUBJECT: Staff Study on Soviet Germ Warfare Campaign (PSB D-25)

The attached staff study on the current Soviet germ warfare campaign (PSB D-25) is submitted for information and for approval of the recommendations (Paragraphs 19 through 24).

As indicated in the paragraphs referred to above, it is the view of the PSB staff that the current Soviet BW propaganda campaign, and similar campaigns which may be launched in the future, are of sufficient strategic significance to justify close and continuous attention on the part of PSB. At the same time it is recognized that the PSB staff itself is not competent either to advise the Board on the day-to-day operational aspects of the problem or to act as a watch committee with respect to new developments in regard to the Soviet campaign and its implications. It is therefore felt that the proposals contained in Paragraphs 22, 23 and 24 best meet the requirements of the problem from an administrative point of view.

As the aim of the present study was merely to identify the problem and to suggest machinery for dealing with it, no attempt has been made at a definitive analysis of the subject. Since the completion of this study new intelligence has been received indicating that the conclusions could have been strengthened, particularly along the following lines:

1. The Soviet hate-America campaigns are increasingly focussed upon inciting hatred of the U.S. armed forces. Apart from the possible light this throws on Soviet intentions or expectations in the present world situation, it is particularly prejudicial to the U.S. national interest, as compared with less specific types of anti-American propaganda.
2. The campaigns are conducted with as much intensity inside the USSR as in satellite or non-communist countries, and the Soviet government has officially identified itself with even the more extravagant anti-American propaganda to a marked degree. This fact may be a further clue to Soviet intentions, but perhaps its chief significance is that the Soviet government cannot effectively disavow the campaign or equate it with any privately sponsored anti-communist campaigns in the Western press.
3. By their very nature the Soviet charges might acquire a kind of retrospective credibility if circumstances ever made it necessary for us to use chemical warfare, BW, RW, etc. Even the more banal charges of mistreatment of prisoners acquire an appearance of veracity in the eyes of many people when accidents or isolated acts of brutality occur as they are statistically certain to occur when large numbers of prisoners are being handled.

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4. Regardless of the quantitative intensity of the Soviet campaign, the substance of the Soviet charges against the United States armed forces gives the present campaign a character that is almost without precedent in time of peace. To the degree that the charges of U.S. atrocities gain credence they risk poisoning the minds of future generations as well as of the present one. Propaganda of this type is itself a horror-weapon. It is an attack not only against the United States, but against the very structure of human civilization.

For all the reasons indicated above, and particularly because of the last one, it is my considered view that we should treat the Soviet hate-America campaigns in their current form as a special problem requiring unusually thoughtful and intensive efforts not merely to counteract the effects of the propaganda but to indict the rulers of the USSR before the bar of world opinion for one of the most serious crimes against humanity they have yet committed. Surely, this is an opportunity which should not be missed to array on our side the moral and cultural leaders of the whole world, including the very ones who have sometimes been most easily duped by communist peace-propaganda. This is our chance to shoot down, once and for all, the Stockholm dove. It is also an unusually good occasion to seek from friendly nations and from international organizations more adequate recognition than the U.S. has yet been given for its disinterested efforts to utilize our technological resources for the relief of human want and suffering throughout the world.

In presenting the study to the Board I should like to acknowledge the valuable assistance given my staff in preparing it by Colonel Kenneth K. Hansen of the Office, Chief of Psychological Warfare, Department of the Army.

(Signed)
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Director

Attachment:

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dated 3 June 1952

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